

Pinwheel Garden at St. Mark's

Just over 1,000 Pinwheels now grace the St. Mark's lawn – installed there by CASA of Kent County to represent the number of Kent County children who were in foster due to abuse or neglect last year. CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) is one of the community organizations we support through our Outreach Ministry, and each year they use our lawn for their Pinwheel Garden in April, which is Child Abuse Prevention Month.

CASA is a non-profit that recruits and trains volunteers from throughout the community to be advocates for children who are in foster care. CASA volunteers meet with the child or group of siblings they work with on a regular basis, get to know the child(ren), their circumstances, and all the people currently involved in the child's case, then make recommendations to the family court judge overseeing the case as to what is in the child's best interest. They act as the child's voice while they are in foster care.

Did you know that several members of our parish are involved in the child welfare system in Kent County? Multiple parishioners donate to the various non-profits that oversee foster care in Kent County as well as CASA and the Children's Advocacy Center, which helps children who have been sexually abused. Other members have been volunteers and board members for these organizations, and a handful have jobs in child welfare.

One way we can all get involved, however, is to keep children in foster care in our prayers. They experience so much trauma and uncertainty in their young lives. We can also pray for their biological and foster families, and all those charged with their care.

To learn more about CASA of Kent County, you can visit www.CASAKentCo.org. You can make an online donation there as well. Or, contact parishioner Angie Brown at angela.brown@kentcountymi.gov.